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U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

BUREAU OF ANIMAL INDUSTRY

JOHN R. MOHLER, Chief of Bureau

“BETTER SIRES—BETTER STOCK”

PLAN OF NATION-WIDE CRUSADE TO
IMPROVE QUALITY OF LIVE STOCK
THROUGH USE OF GOOD
PURE-BRED SIRES



WASHINGTON
GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE
1919

BANISH INFERIOR SIRES FROM THE UNITED STATES.

WITH confidence that better live stock will bring satisfaction and many benefits to its owners, I invite the concerted action of farmers, stockmen, and others in banishing scrub sires from the United States. The widespread use of inferior male breeding animals has been for many years a cause of low production per animal and of needlessly poor quality.

The continuance of such conditions is uneconomic and unnecessary. The direct and practical means of improvement is to use breeding animals, especially sires, which are true representatives of breeds developed for a definite, useful purpose.

I am confident, too, that the public, knowing production to be performed with maximum efficiency, will look upon stock raising with increased respect and understanding. In a few localities noteworthy improvement in special lines has been taking place through individual and community efforts. Let us hasten such improvement wherever live stock is kept in the United States.

J. R. MOHLER,
Chief Bureau of Animal Industry.

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“BETTER SIRES—BETTER STOCK.”

PLAN OF NATION-WIDE CRUSADE TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF LIVE STOCK THROUGH USE OF GOOD PURE-BRED SIRES.

GENERAL PLAN.

PURPOSE OF THE CAMPAIGN.

The purpose and goal in view is the improvement of the principal classes of domestic live stock in the United States. Improvement has been taking place for many years, but progress can be hastened, it is believed, by definite, systematic, and concerted action.

MEANS OF IMPROVEMENT.

The value of live stock depends on good care, housing, feeding, and disease control, as well as on breeding. Good breeding, however, determines the fundamental capacity of an animal to be profitable to its owner. Accordingly the replacement of scrub sires by good pure bred is considered a basis for all other improvement. While the use of good females is likewise important, good sires bring results more quickly and economically in most cases.

NEED FOR BETTER LIVE STOCK.

The underlying need for improvement of live stock in the United States is to increase efficiency in the production of meats and live-stock products, including dairy and poultry commodities. Economical production is one of the surest and best means of maintaining a healthy volume of domestic trade and of meeting foreign competition. Success in both these fields is necessary to support a live-stock industry of sufficient size to meet the future food needs of the country and, through animal fertilizer and other by-products, develop a well-balanced agriculture.

BASIS FOR NATION-WIDE CAMPAIGN.

The nation-wide campaign of live-stock improvement now being undertaken is in response to popular sentiment and to support local campaigns undertaken through State, community, and individual initiative. The plans on which the nation-wide effort is conducted embody no essentially new features of live-stock improvement. On the other hand, they have been developed from successful policies already used on a smaller scale.

BETTER KNOWLEDGE OF BREEDING PRINCIPLES.

The campaign need not interfere with any work of live-stock improvement now in progress in any part of the country. Its primary purpose is educational and it is largely intended to acquaint live-stock owners with the principles of successful breeding. To make results effective and the campaign definite, a plan of enrollment is provided and each person enrolled receives an official emblem in recognition.

FIELD ORGANIZATION AND ENROLLMENT.

The work will be conducted through organizations already existing and through such new ones as may arise locally to meet future needs. Several hundred county agents, extension workers, breeders, and others have signified their support. The States Relations Service of the United States Department of Agriculture requests that workers under its direct or indirect supervision give the campaign their active cooperation.

WHO MAY BE ENROLLED.

Any person in the United States who keeps any kind of domestic live stock may take part in the campaign and be so enrolled. It includes the boy or girl who has merely a pig or some poultry, as well as the ranchman or extensive live-stock breeder. The enrollment of persons permanently engaged in raising live stock for market is especially desired.

METHOD OF ENROLLMENT.

A person desiring to be enrolled in the better livestock campaign fills out a simple blank (which is furnished by the department) showing the kind and number of animals kept for breeding and he agrees that all sires used for breeding from the date of signing the blank must be pure breeds of good quality. Females may be pure bred, crossbred, grade, or scrub. Animals listed should be those actually owned by the person signing the blank, but sires not owned may be used provided they are pure bred and of good quality. Definitions of these classes appear on the blank as follows:

DEFINITIONS RELATING TO CHARACTER OF BREEDING.

Pure-bred: A pure-bred animal is one of pure breeding representing a definite, recognized breed and both of whose parents were pure-bred animals of the same breed. To be considered pure bred, live stock must be either registered, eligible to registration, or (in the absence of public registry for that class) have such lineage that its pure breeding can be definitely proved. To be of good type and quality, the animal must be healthy, vigorous, and a creditable specimen of its breed.

Thoroughbred: The term "Thoroughbred" applies accurately only to the breed of running horses eligible to registration in the General Stud Book of England, the American Stud Book, or affiliated stud books for Thoroughbred horses in other countries. (List Thoroughbred in the pure-bred column of the blank.)

Standardbred: Applied to horses, this term refers to a distinct breed of American light horses, which includes both trotters and pacers which are eligible to registration in the American Trotting Register. Applied to poultry, the term includes all birds bred to conform to the standards of form, color, markings, weight, etc., for the various breeds under the

standard of perfection of the American Poultry Association. (List Standardbred horses and poultry in the pure-bred column of the blank.)

Scrub: A scrub is an animal of mixed or unknown breeding without definite type or markings. Such terms as native, mongrel, razorback, dunghill, piney woods, cayuse, broncho, and mustang are somewhat synonymous with "scrub," although many of the animals described by these terms have a certain fixity of type, even though they present no evidence of systematic improved breeding.

Crossbred: This term applies to the progeny of pure-bred parents of different breeds but of the same species.

Grade: A grade is the offspring resulting from mating a pure bred with a scrub, or from mating animals not pure bred but having close pure-bred ancestors. The offspring of a pure bred and a grade is also a grade, but through progressive improvement becomes a high grade.

DISTRIBUTION OF ENROLLMENT BLANKS.

Directions on the enrollment blank state clearly how it should be filled out and where it should be sent. It contains also the following declaration, which the live-stock owner signs:

I have listed in the foregoing statement the number of cattle, horses, asses, swine, sheep, goats, and poultry kept for breeding and in the future will keep and use only pure-bred sires of good quality in those classes of live stock.

I will also follow, to the best of my ability, breeding methods leading to live-stock improvement.

Dogs, cats, rabbits, and other classes of animals not mentioned in the list are not officially included in the crusade. It is recommended, however, that pure-bred sires be used in those classes also, wherever practicable.

The blanks are furnished in moderate quantities to county agents and similar workers upon their re-

quest to the United States Department of Agriculture; also to live-stock owners (only one to each person) upon their request to the department.

When a blank, properly filled out and signed, reaches the Department of Agriculture the emblem is issued.

THE OFFICAL EMBLEM.

The emblem bears the name and address of the live-stock owner, date enrolled, and a serial number signifying the order in which it was issued. It measures about 8 by 10 inches, is printed in two colors on heavy durable paper, and carries the seal of the United States Department of Agriculture. Space is left below the seal for signatures and titles, as provided under the Optional Distribution Plan. The emblem carries the following text:

"BETTER SIRES—BETTER STOCK."

Upon evidence of interest in better live stock and desire to take part in a Nation-wide crusade of improvement, including cattle, horses, asses, swine, sheep, goats, and poultry, the United States Department of Agriculture and the State Agricultural College have officially enrolled:

(Name of live-stock owner.)

(Address.)

(Date enrolled.)

(Emblem No.)

Every sire kept or used has been declared (by the person named above) to be a pure bred of good quality; in recognition of which this emblem is issued and its display authorized by the

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE,
[SEAL.] *STATE AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE,*
and Cooperating Agencies.

The following statement also appears in small type:

This emblem is granted in recognition of meritorious desire and effort in live-stock improvement. It is not a guaranty of the quality of any domestic animals and its display is unauthorized if the declaration above is not carried out.

Enrollment blanks and emblems are furnished free of cost.

VARYING STATE CONDITIONS RECOGNIZED.

It is recognized that live-stock conditions and problems of administration vary greatly in different States. Accordingly, and to give each State all the supervision it desires to exercise, an optional-plan system of handling the campaign in each State is presented. The extension director in any State may decide upon the channels which the enrollment blank and the emblem are to follow in official handling.

OPTIONAL DISTRIBUTION PLAN.

Three general plans are presented:

I. THE LONG WAY.

Enrollment blank is signed by live-stock owner.

Signed by county agent or similar authorized worker where there is such county agent or worker (otherwise by two disinterested persons who have examined the live stock).

Signed by extension director or other college official.

Sent to U. S. Department of Agriculture and emblem issued.

Emblem is sent back through same channel, but in the opposite direction so that the officials mentioned may, if they choose, place their names on the emblem. A convenient place is the space below the seal.

II. THE MEDIUM WAY.

Plan II is similar to Plan I except that the emblem is sent direct to the live-stock owner. This plan saves considerable time and also prevents possible damage to the emblem.

NOTE.—As in Plan I, the extension director may designate other officials whose signatures will be accepted.

III. THE SHORT WAY.

The blank is signed by the live-stock owner and also by a county agent (or by two disinterested persons who have examined the live stock).

It is then sent to the United States Department of Agriculture and the emblem is sent direct to the owner. In all cases a record of the enrollment, including number and kind of animals reported, is sent to the college for such disposal or use as it may choose to make.

The success of the crusade depends on dispatch in the handling of enrollment blanks and emblems, and it is believed the emblem should reach the live-stock owner within 30 days from the time he submits his enrollment blank.

LIST OF STATE OFFICIALS.

In order that county agents and extension workers in any State may know the official in charge of the better live-stock campaign in that State, a list of such officials by States will be compiled and revised quarterly. The list may be obtained on request from the Department of Agriculture, and it will show which of the optional plans is in effect in each State.

RECORDS OF PROGRESS.

The United States Department of Agriculture will keep records of progress by counties and will an-

nounce results periodically through the Weekly News Letter and other news services of the Office of Information.

LOCAL ACTIVITIES ENCOURAGED.

To be effective and obtain best results, the general plan necessarily must be readily understood and as free as possible from details. However, many practical and valuable additions suitable for local development are likely to present themselves and the Department of Agriculture looks with favor upon any supplementary activities which lead to practical results.

Among the various means useful in hastening live-stock improvement are cow-testing associations, bull associations, fairs, live-stock shows and exhibitions, judging contests, boys' and girls' clubs, community marketing organizations, farm bureaus, and committees for selecting live stock and determining its quality and value.

PURCHASE, SALE, AND DISTRIBUTION OF ANIMALS.

In counties where farm bureaus, farm councils, or live-stock associations are already formed, those organizations are considered the logical bodies to handle the purchase, sale, and distribution of animals. In other counties the organization of such bodies is encouraged. Purchasers are cautioned to deal only with breeders known to be reliable and are warned against speculators and others who may attempt to dispose of diseased or inferior stock. Thorough investigation before purchasing is advised. Purchases made through local farm bureaus or live-stock organizations or with the assistance of county agents are likely to be satisfactory. While some widely advertised families of breeding stock are very high priced, many breeders of desirable pure-bred sires, it is believed, are able to furnish good animals at reasonable cost.

RECORDS OF DOMINANT BREEDS IN COUNTIES.

Experience has shown the desirability for communities and counties to concentrate their efforts on only a few breeds and types of the different kinds of live stock. When this is done farmers can aid one another in building up their stock with much better results than when each person raises a different breed.

As a service to persons interested in examining or selecting live stock, the United States Department of Agriculture will keep a record of the dominant breeds and varieties of the different kinds of live stock in each county when such information is obtained from dependable sources. Pending developments in this field, a breed or variety will be considered dominant if 100 or more good pure-bred sires of that breed or variety are owned and used for breeding in the county.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION.

Sources of information that will be recognized include county agents, officers of State agricultural colleges, and State boards of agriculture. Live-stock associations are requested to transmit figures on pure-bred sires to the office of their county agent or through the State agricultural college. The number of pure-bred sires by counties should be given, together with the date the count was made. Initiative in making the count and reporting it rests with the county and State officials.

SUPPLEMENTARY RECORDS ON PROMINENT BREEDS.

Information reported in this manner to the Department of Agriculture will be available to the public. Thus, persons wishing to examine or purchase any kind of live stock may learn what counties in the United States, according to the records, have pure-bred sires of each of the breeds or varieties in which

he is interested. Naturally that number of sires would stamp their quality to a considerable extent on the live stock of the county, and would lead to the production of many desirable grade females as well as pure-bred stock of both sexes. In counties where a certain breed is considered dominant, even though there are fewer than 100 pure-bred sires, or where the number is unknown, the facts may be reported and will be kept as a supplementary record.

GENERAL POLICIES.

The following statements outline the general policies adopted for conducting the campaign:

The elimination of scrub pure-bred sires, as well as common scrubs of mixed breeding, will receive emphasis.

Feeding and care are fully as important as good breeding, and the department does not encourage ownership of well-bred live stock by persons unwilling or unable to give such stock competent care.

The emblem is an official recognition of meritorious desire and effort in live-stock improvement, but is not a guaranty of the quality of live stock.

Emphasis will be placed on individual benefits to be derived from a more efficient production rather than on an increased number of animals.

The campaign urges replacement of scrub sires by good pure breeds, but does not urge pure-bred live stock of both sexes on the average American farm. Whether pure-bred females should be kept is a matter of individual judgment.

Farmers who do not care to take part in the crusade of live-stock improvement are requested to let their children do so.

THE ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE.

The administration of the campaign is in charge of a committee composed of Dr. John R. Mohler, Chief of the Bureau of Animal Industry, chairman; B. H.

Rawl, Assistant Chief of the Bureau, and George M. Rommel, Chief of the Animal Husbandry Division. The committee works closely with the States Relations Service of the department and with the live-stock men of the country.

COOPERATING AGENCIES.

In addition to the activities of the various agricultural colleges and experiment stations and the United States Department of Agriculture and its workers, various organizations and agencies have for many years been active in live-stock improvement and have signified a desire to cooperate in the Nation-wide better live-stock campaign. Such organizations, regarded as cooperating agencies, include live-stock associations, agricultural publications, officials in charge of veterinary work and regulatory measures for disease control, financial institutions interested in agriculture, and individual breeders.

INFORMATION ON BREEDING.

As a guide to persons inexperienced in live-stock breeding, a Farmers' Bulletin dealing with the underlying principles and methods of procedure will be issued. The Department of Agriculture is also prepared to furnish bulletins dealing with the selection, care, and feeding of live stock, disease control, and similar topics.

FARM EXPERIENCES DESIRED.

Persons taking part in the campaign are invited and urged to write freely to the department telling their observations, experiences, and incidents in live-stock improvement. Good photographs of animals obtained by use of pure-bred sires, together with photographs of the parent stock, are also desired and will be returned on request. Suitable material when accompanied by authentic facts will be given extended circulation as a part of the better live-stock campaign.

TYPICAL QUESTIONS ANSWERED.

Questions which may arise should be answered with the policy in view of stopping the use of scrub sires and encouraging the use of good pure bred. The following questions are typical:

Question.—Need a person keep all the classes of live stock mentioned in order to take part in the crusade?

Answer.—By no means. He may keep only one class or several classes.

Question.—If a person has no live stock but wishes to join the campaign, may he be enrolled?

Answer.—No; not until he becomes the owner of live stock. The person with even one breeding animal, however, is eligible. If a male, it must be a pure bred. If a female, it may be of any quality but must be bred to a good pure-bred sire.

Question. If a person enrolls and then finds it too difficult to comply with the requirements, may he withdraw?

Answer. Yes; he may withdraw by returning the official emblem, with an explanation of the circumstances. But persons contemplating such a course are advised to defer enrollment until they can comply with the conditions.

Question.—If a person has pure-bred sires in all classes of animals he raises to sell but intends to breed his work mares, for instance, to a scrub or grade stallion and to raise the colts for farm work, is he eligible to enrollment in the campaign?

Answer.—No. Horses are included among the classes named and the mares must be bred to a pure-bred sire.

Question.—When poultry, for instance, are on range and a neighbor's inferior sires are with them, how is it possible to comply with the requirements?

Answer.—The requirements are not violated unless chickens are raised from the eggs of hens sired by such males. It would be preferable, however, to induce the owner of the inferior roosters to dispose of them. In any case the breeding birds of a person enrolled in the campaign should be confined to his own premises and other males fenced out during the breeding season.

Question.—Who is to determine whether sires are of good quality as well as being pure bred?

Answer.—While the opinions of the owner and others who have examined the stock will be accepted, it is suggested that he consult also an experienced judge of live stock before filling out his enrollment blank. Sires which are diseased, undersized, or otherwise inferior, even though pure bred, should be avoided. Information on desirable types of live stock may be obtained from the Department of Agriculture.

Question.—Need pure-bred sires purchased be registered?

Answer.—Pure-bred animals bought or sold preferably should be registered as a proof of pure breeding.

Question.—If a person has a grade sire, a bull, for instance, of exceptionally good type and which resembles a pure bred and he intends to get a registered pure-bred bull later, can he be enrolled in the campaign?

Answer.—Not until he stops using the grade bull as a sire. It is suggested that he sell the grade bull, and, until he obtains a pure-bred bull of his own, breed his cows to a good pure-bred bull owned by someone else. In that case he would be eligible to enrollment.

Question.—May children be enrolled, and is there any age limit?

Answer.—There is no age limit. Children who own live stock and who are able to sign their names and comply with the requirements may be enrolled. Chil-

dren interested in live stock should be encouraged to enroll.

The foregoing questions and answers indicate the proper disposal of inquiries which may arise. Questions to which the answers are not clearly indicated by the contents of this booklet may be referred to the Department of Agriculture for answer.



PLAN OF THE CRUSADE IN BRIEF.

Date of inaugurating the crusade, October 1, 1919.

Its slogan: BETTER SIRES—BETTER STOCK.

Its aim: To hasten the replacement of the multitude of scrub domestic animals with pure-bred or high-grade stock, and to improve the quality of pure breds themselves.

Its main method: Use of only good pure-bred sires in breeding, sires in many cases to be owned cooperatively or exchanged.

Live stock included: Cattle, horses and asses, swine, sheep, goats, and poultry.

Reasons for campaign: Quality and productive capacity of the average American farm animal are still low. Millions of farmers are wasting time and money on animals that give less returns for the same expenditure than would better stock.

General policies:

Federal department's chief interest will be to reinforce work of State and counties. The real work must be done locally.

Plan includes everyone who keeps any kind of domestic live stock, from the boy or girl with a pig or a few chickens to the ranchman or extensive breeder of live stock.

Scrub pure-bred sires as well as common scrubs should be eliminated.

Feeding and care fully as important as good breeding.

Emphasis on the *use* of good pure-bred sires rather than on ownership.

Local agricultural leaders in every community to decide whether campaign shall be intensive or conducted slowly. The general effort is a long campaign, however, likely to require many years.

Individual benefits and more efficient production to be stressed, rather than increased number of animals.

Each county to follow its own ideas as to the kind of stock its farmers should keep.

The plan of campaign interferes in no way with any work in live-stock improvement now being conducted, but makes all the work more definite and effective by providing official recognition for progressive breeders.

